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publicity re biog. PHILIP LAMANTIA

Born San Francisco 1927. Inspired contact with surrealism in 1943 during the monthlong retrospectives of Dali and Miro at the local museum. Finds some theoretic writings by Breton and begins writing from the zone of "pure psychic automatism". Discovers View: A Magazine of the Arts (edited by C.H.Ford and Parker Tyler) who instantly accept five poems featured in the June, 1943 issue. Not long after (having found the "official" surrealist review edited by Andre Breton, Duchamp, Ernst and David Hare) at the request of Breton clarified his position about surrealism in a letter titled "Surrealism in 1943" which was published along with a page of poems in the 4th and last number of the review, VVV. 1944: lived in New York City where he met with Breton and other surrealists-in-exile, along with artists in affinity with the movement such as Maya Deren, Kurt Seligman, Lionel Abel, Harold Rosenberg and Charles Duits whose hospitality he enjoyed frequently during this sojourn. Also in Manhattan, deepened his appreciation of the new jazz currents heard in night-clubs of that era.

Returned to San Francisco by 1945. Edited first number of The Ark a new magazine reflective of the post World War II anarcho-pacifist culture he was part of, along with Kenneth Rexroth and other poet-friends later identified as the "San Francisco Renaissance". Published first book, Erotic Poems, 1946. In 1950 moved again to New York City where he first met and hungout with Allen Ginsberg, Jack Keroauc and Carl Solomon, etc.

Living in Mexico from remote regions of the Cora Indians in the mountains of the Western Sierras, San Blas to Mexico City, during various periods in the 1950s and early 1960s. Published Ekstasis, 1959 and Destroyed Works, 1962. 1963: went on a five year odyssey to Spain, Morocco, France and Greece. Early surrealist poetry collected and published as Touch of the Marvelous, 1966; first City Lights book, Selected Poems, 1967. Initial and abiding contact with the western esoteric tradition through Andre VandenBroeck who, not long before death of, in 1966, studied almost daily for two years with R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, whose monumental work, The Temple of Man, is at last translated from the french into english, published in 1998 by Inner Tradtions. Lamantia's longish poem, Egypt, dedicated to Schwaller, is the second to last poem in Bed of Sphinxes (City Lights Books, 1997.)

Since 1970, Lamantia has been living in San Francisco where he has taught at SF State and SF Art Institute various times; subsequent books: Blood of the Air (1970), Becoming Visible (1981), Meadowlark West (1986) and most recent, Bed of Sphinxes: Selected Poems 1943-1993.

Frequent travels and sojourns in Northern California's wilder regions and AmerIndian sites inspired a poetry that re-imagines natural forms from the inner zone surrealism located "between sleep and waking" Poe was the first to specify.

Results of collective writing by class members:
The Exaltation of THE EXQUISITE CORPSE

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The hilarious bed laughs the wet skeleton

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A torpid soda eats the dusty ambulance

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The green horse scattered ridiculous sky

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The frightened air devours the ruby colored castle

•

Deathly baby bottle skips the precipitant street

•

The posthumous zebra catapults the wretched ice cube

•

The purple-gold alchemy flew the shimmering engine

•

Poisonous rain danced the tawny cot

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The black cocktail vibrates the greasy dog

•

The golden structure walks through limp fireflys

•

The red-winged bicycle feels eminent tears

•

Sticky rain swimming the sentimental blackbird

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